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# New Educational Review

## **Professor Zbigniew Kwiecinski - doctor *honoris causa* of the University of Opole**

Professor Kwiecinski is a prominent creative personality in Polish pedagogy, whose rebellious nature became known as early as at primary school. Uneducational or even shocking treatment by a teacher, which might have discouraged other pupils, led the future Professor to deciding on further hard work and was the beginning of his interest in pedagogy. Therefore, to the astonishment of his teachers, who advised him to study medicine or law, after his school leaving exam he enrolled for pedagogy. The period immediately after his graduation was the time of his first original undertakings: the foundation of an experimental School in Toruń with his study friends and the beginning of research into backward environment. This research and further studies dealing with social aspects of country school were reflected not only in such papers as those published in 1972: "Functioning of School in Rural Environment" and "School Drop-out in the Country" but also in the triptych republished recently: "Exclusion," "The Helpless," and "Unavoidable?"

Those and other papers exposing school are a mere fraction of Professor Kwiecinski's impressive scientific achievements which include 18 books, several edited books and a few hundred of articles published in renowned journals, also in foreign ones. The Author presented in them the results of research conducted by himself or by teams supervised by him. It was qualitative, quantitative and longitudinal research, the latter being unique worldwide.

Professor's research into vanguard trends of contemporary pedagogy is especially noteworthy (critical, postmodernist, emancipation, multi-cultural or alternative pedagogy). There are such papers mentioned in this field as: "Studies and Sketches on Borderline Pedagogy," "Tracks, Attempts, Traces," or the book published last year: "Pedagogy. Academic Coursebook."

In all the books the Author makes critical reflections on the conditions of the development of societies and refers them to the educational sphere showing his concern and anxiety about young people's development opportunities and the quality of their life.

Professor's attitude of a great innovator and scientific initiator is also seen in the journals he founded and edited, such as "Educational Studies," "Sociology of Education," or "Educational Forum."

The above-mentioned achievements are undoubtedly the result of his talent, which was additionally supported by such eminent pedagogues as professor Kazimierz Sosnicki and professor Ludwik Bandura. If we add Professor's laboriousness, it is not surprising that he has been awarded a prize of the Polish Academy of Sciences for the best book of the year on pedagogy twice, a first degree award of the Minister of Education for outstanding scientific achievements conferred twice, and the prize of the Prime Minister for the said triptych.

Apart from Professor's creative achievements, attention should be drawn to his investment in the development of young pedagogues. What is noteworthy in this domain is the "Thursday Seminar" established in Torun as early as in the 1970s. It gathers a few hundred of regular participants every week. They are young pedagogues presenting results of their own research and seeking adequate theories and methodological solutions together with Professor Kwiecinski. Those seminars were then converted into discussion meetings called "Absent Discourse," having as guests not only a lot of eminent Polish scientists but also such experts from abroad as H. Giroux, Me Laren or H. Schoenebeck.

The number of Professor's alumni is impressive. It comprises not only PhD holders supervised by him but also holders of postdoctoral degrees and professors inspired by his creative thought. Only as Dean of the Faculty of Educational Studies at Poznan University he admitted 100 people into PhD and postdoctoral programmes.

Professor's positions and different functions are so numerous that it is impossible to enumerate all of them. It is enough to say that in the 1970s he established a post of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Torun, which was supervised by him till 1986. Three years afterwards he became chairman of the Polish Pedagogical Society and was an initiator and organiser of four All-Polish Pedagogical Congresses. Since 1990 he has been a member of the Central Commission for Scientific Titles and Degrees and also a member of the Scientific Research Committee, a member of the presidium of the Pedagogical Science Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences, a member of the Committee of Forecast, "Poland 2000 Plus" at the presidium of the Polish Academy of Sciences, from 1996 to 2001 he was a member of the Consultative Council for the National Education Reform and currently he is a member of the Consultative Group of the Minister of Education dealing with changes in higher education and an expert of the State Accreditation Commission for pedagogy as a university major.

Beyond all doubt, it should be stated that Professor Kwiecinski is not only a leader of Polish pedagogy but also an institution and an example to be followed by young pedagogues. It is worth mentioning that only three years after his doctorate he passed his postdoctoral examination to be conferred the title of professor six years later.